

14th September 2008 Al-'Aqidah al-Nasafiyyah: The Islamic Creed As Explained by the Great Imam Nasafi

The Shaykh, the Imam, Najm ad-Din Abu Hafs Umar ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad an-Nasafi (*rahimuhullah*) said:

The People of Verity, contradicting the Sceptics (Sufistiqliya, i.e. Sophists) say that the real natures of things are validly established and that the science of them is certain.

Further, that the sources of knowledge for mankind are three: the sound Senses, true Narration (khabar), and Reason (aql).

As for the Senses, they are five: Hearing, Sight, Smell, Taste and Touch, and by each sense you are informed concerning that for which it is appointed.

True Narration, again, is of two kinds. The one is narration handed down along a large number of lines of tradition (mutawatir); that is, it is established by the tongues of a number of people of whom we cannot imagine that they would agree in a lie. It compels a knowledge which is of necessity (daruri), such as the knowledge of departed kings in past times and of distant countries.

And the second is Narration by the Apostle Rasulullah (*sallallahu `alaihi wassallam*) aided by miracle [i.e., Muhammad], and it compels deduced knowledge (istidlali), and the knowledge established by it resembles in certainty and fixity the knowledge established by necessity.

Then as for Reason, it is a cause of knowledge also; and whatever is established by intuition (badaha) is of necessity, as the knowledge that everything is greater than its parts; and whatever is established by inference is acquired knowledge (iktisabi), as the existence of fire from the appearance of smoke. And the Inner Light (ilham) with the People of Verity is not one of the causes of knowledge as to the soundness of anything.

Further, the world in the totality of its parts is a thing originated (muhdath), in that it consists of Substances (ayns) and Attributes (arads). The Substances are what exist in themselves, and a substance is either a compound, that is a body (jism), or not compounded like an essence (jawhar), namely a division that is not further divided. And the attributes are what do not exist in themselves but have a dependent existence in bodies or essences, such as colors, tastes, conditions (kawns), odors.

The Originator (Muhdith) of the world is Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) Most High, the One, the Eternal, the Decreeing, the Knowing, the Hearing, the Seeing, the Willing. He is not an attribute, nor a body, nor an essence, nor a thing formed, nor a thing bounded, nor a thing numbered, nor a thing divided, nor a thing compounded, nor a thing limited; and He is not described by quiddity (mahiya), nor by modality (kayfiya), and He does not exist in place or time, and there is nothing that resembles Him and nothing that is outwith His knowledge and power.

He has qualities (sifat) from all eternity (azali) existing in His essence. They are not He nor are they any other than He. They are Knowledge and Power and Life and Strength and Hearing and Seeing and Doing and Creating and Sustaining and Speech (kalam).

And He, whose Majesty is majestic, speaks with a Word (kalam). This Word is a quality from all eternity, not belonging to the genus of letters and sounds, a quality that is incompatible with coming to silence and that has no weakness.

Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) speaks with this Word, commanding and prohibiting and narrating. And the Qur'an is the untreated Word of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*), repeated by our tongues, heard by our ears, written in our copies, preserved in our hearts, yet not simply a transient state (hal) in these [i.e., the tongues, ears, etc.].

And Creating (takwin) is a quality of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) from all eternity, and it is the Creating of the world and of every one of its parts at the time of its becoming existent, and this quality of Creating is not the thing created, according to our opinion.

And Willing is a quality of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) from all eternity, existing in His essence.

And that there is a Vision (ru'ya) of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) is allowed by reason and certified by tradition (naql). A proof on authority has come down with the affirmation that believers have a Vision of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) in Paradise and that He is seen, not in a place or in a direction or by facing or the joining of glances or the placing of a distance between him who sees and Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*).

And Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) is the Creator of all actions of His creatures, whether of unbelief or belief, of obedience or of rebellion; all of them are by the will of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) and His sentence and His conclusion and His decreeing.

And to His creatures belong actions of choice (ikhtiyar), for which they are rewarded or punished, and the good in these is by the good pleasure (rida) of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) and the vile in them is not by His good pleasure.

And the ability to do the action (istita'a) goes along with the action and is the essence of the power (qudra) by which the action takes place, and this word "ability" means the soundness of the causes and instruments and limbs. And the validity of the imposition of the task (taklif) is based upon this ability, and the creature has not a task imposed upon him that is not in his power.

And the pain which is found in one who is beaten as a consequence of being beaten by any man, and the state of being broken in glass as a consequence of its being broken by any man, and such things, all that is created by Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*), and the creature has no part in its creation and a slain man is dead because his appointed time (ajal) has come; and death exists in a slain man and is created by Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*), and the appointed time is one.

And that which is forbidden (haram) is still Sustenance (rizq), and each one receives his own Sustenance whether it consists of permitted or of forbidden things; and let no one imagine that a man shall not eat his Sustenance or that another than he shall eat his Sustenance.

And Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) leadeth astray whom He wills and guideth aright whom He wills, and it is not incumbent upon Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) to do that which may be best (aslah) for the creature.

The punishment of the grave for unbelievers and for some rebellious ones of the believers, and the bliss of the obedient in the grave, and the questioning by Munkar and Nakir are established by proofs of authority.

And the Quickening of the Dead (ba'th) is a Verity, and the Weighing is a Verity, and the Book is a Verity and the Tank (hawd) is a Verity, and the Bridge, as-Sirat, is a Verity, and the Garden is a Verity, and the Fire is a Verity, and they are both created, existing, continuing; they shall not pass away and their people shall not pass away.

A great sin (kabira) does not exclude the creature who believes from the Belief (iman) and does not make

him an unbeliever. And Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) does not forgive him who joins another with Himself, but He forgives anything beneath that to whom He wills, of sins small (*saghira*) or great.

And there may be punishment for a small and pardon for a great one, if it be not of the nature of considering lawful what is forbidden, for that is unbelief (*kufr*).

And the intercession (*shafa'a*) of the Apostles and of the excellent on behalf of those who commit great sins is established.

And those believers who commit great sins do not remain eternally in the Fire although they die without repentance.

Belief (*iman*) is assent (*tasdiq*) to that which comes from Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) and confession (*iqrar*) of it. Then, as for Works (*amal*), they are acts of obedience and gradually increase of themselves, but Belief does not increase and does not diminish. And Belief and al-Islam are one. And whenever assent and confession are found in a creature, it is right that he should say, "I am a believer in truth." And it is not fitting that he should say, "I am a believer if Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) will."

The happy one sometimes becomes miserable and the miserable one sometimes becomes happy, and the changing is in happiness and misery, and not in making happy and making miserable: for those are both qualities of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*), and there is no changing in Him nor in His qualities.

And in the sending of Apostles (*rasuls*) is an advantage and Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) has sent Apostles of flesh unto flesh with good tidings, warning and explaining to men the things of the world and of faith, of which they have need. And He has aided them with miracles (*mu'jizat*) which break the order of nature.

The first of the Prophets (*nabis*) was Adam and the last is Muhammad, Upon both of them be Peace! A statement of their number has been handed down in several traditions, but the more fitting course is that there should be no limiting to a number in naming them; Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) has said, "Of them are those concerning whom We have recited to thee, and of them are those concerning whom We have not recited to thee." And there is no security in a statement of number against there being entered among them some that are not of them, or of there being excluded from them some that are of them. They all give intelligence concerning Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*), are veracious and sincere, and the most excellent of the Prophets is Muhammad (*sallallahu `alaihi wassallam*)

The Angels are servants of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) and work according to His commands. They are not described as masculine or feminine.

And Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) has books which He has revealed to His Prophets, and in them are His commands and His promises.

The Night Journey (*mi'raj*) of the Apostle of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*)--Upon whom be Blessing and Peace! while awake, in the body, to Heaven, then to what place Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) willed of the Exalted Regions, is a Verity.

The Wonders (*karamat*) of the Saints (*walis*) are a Verity. And a Wonder on the part of a Saint appears by way of a contradiction of the ordinary course of nature, such as passing over a great distance in a short time, and the appearing of meat and drink and clothing at a time of need, and walking upon the water and in the air, and the speech of stones and of beasts, and the warding off of an evil that is approaching, and the guarding of him who is anxious from enemies, and other things of the same kind. And such a thing is to be reckoned as an evidentiary miracle (*mu'jiza*) on behalf of the Apostle followed by the Saint on whose part the

wonder appears. For it is evident by it that he is a Saint and he could never be a Saint unless he were right in his religion and worship and in abiding by the message committed to his Apostle.

The most excellent of mankind after the Prophets are Abu Bakr, the Very Veracious (*as-Siddiq*), then Umar, the Divider (*al-Faruq*), then Uthman, he of the Two Lights (*Dhu-n-Nurayn*), then Ali--The good-will of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) be upon them! Their Khalifates were in this order, and the Khalifate extended to thirty years; then, thereafter, came kings and princes.

The Muslims cannot do without a leader (Imam) who shall occupy himself with the enforcing of their decisions, and in maintaining their boundaries and guarding their frontiers, and equipping their armies, and receiving their alms, and putting down robberies and thieving and highwaymen, and maintaining the Friday services and the Festivals, and removing quarrels that fall between creatures, and receiving evidence bearing on legal claims, and marrying minors, male and female, and those who have no guardians, and dividing booty. And it is necessary that the leader should be visible, not hidden and expected to appear (*muntazar*), and that he should be of the tribe of Quraysh and not of any other. And he is not assigned exclusively to the sons of Hashim nor to the children of Ali. And it is not a condition that he should be protected by Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) from sin (*isma*), nor that he should be the most excellent of the people of his time, but it is a condition that he should have administrative ability, should be a good governor and be able to carry out decrees and to guard the restrictive ordinances (*hadd*s) of Islam and to protect the wronged against him who wrongs him. And he is not to be deposed from the leadership on account of immorality or tyranny.

Prayer is allowable behind anyone whether pure or a sinner. And we give the salutation of Peace to the pure and to the sinner.

And we abstain from the mention of the Companions (*radiAllahu `anhum*) of the Prophet (*sallallahu `alaihi wassallam*) except with good.

And we bear witness that Paradise is for the ten to whom the Prophet (*sallallahu `alaihi wassallam*) gave good tidings of Paradise (*al-ashratu-l-mubashshara*).

And we approve the wiping (*mash*) of the inner-shoes (*khuffs*) both at home and when on a journey.

And we do not regard *nabidh* as forbidden.

And the Saint does not reach the level of the Prophets. And the creature does not come to a point where commands and prohibitions and the details of the statutes in their out-ward sense (*zahir*) fall away from him; and the turning aside from these to the views which the People of the Inner Meaning (*batin*) assert is a deviation (*ilh*ad) through unbelief.

And feeling safe from Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) is unbelief. And despairing of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) is unbelief. And rejection of the statutes and contempt for the law is unbelief.

And believing a diviner (*kahin*) in what he tells of the Unseen (*ghayb*) is unbelief. And what does not exist (*ma'dum*) is known of Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) just as what exists (*mawjud*) is known of Him and it [*i.e.*, what does not exist] is neither a thing (*shay*) nor an object of vision (*mar'an*).

And in prayer of the living for the dead, and in alms offered for them there is an advantage to them. And Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) answers prayers and supplies needs.

And what the Prophet has reported of the conditions of the last day (*as-sa'a*), of the appearance of *ad-Dajjal*

and of the beast of the earth and of Yajuj and Majuj and the descent of Isa from heaven and the rising of the sun in the west, that is verity.

And the Mujtahids sometimes err and sometimes hit the mark.

And the Apostles of mankind are more excellent than the Apostles of the angels; and the Apostles of the angels are more excellent than the generality of mankind; and the generality of mankind of the true believers is more excellent than the generality of the angels.

and Allah Ta'ala Knows Best

Posted 14th September 2008 by at-Talib

Labels: 'Aqidah

2

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Anonymous September 13, 2008 at 11:32 PM

Assalamu alaikum MI. Bilal,

Was wondering if you could give us two things please:

1. A link to an arabic version. Is there one?
2. Can you tell us more about Imam Nasafi and his times?

jazakAllahu khair,
-Reader

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at-Talib September 13, 2008 at 11:56 PM

الشيخ نجم الدين أبي حفص عمر بن محمد بن أحمد النسفي. ولد عام 461 هـ/ 1068 - 1069 م بمدينة نسف [2] من بلاد فارس. وتوفي في شهر جمادى الأولى عام 537 هـ/ دجنبر 1142 م. وكان إماماً فاضلاً أصولياً متكلماً مفسراً محدثاً فقيهاً نحوياً لغوياً، وألف في مختلف العلوم نحو 100 مصنف، منها:

3]- "العقائد" [3].

-. "التيسير في التفسير"، في 4 مجلدات

-. "القند"، وهو ذيل على "تواريخ سمرقند" لجعفر بن محمد المستغفري

-. "كتاب النجاح في شرح أخبار كتاب الصحاح" للبخاري

-. "طلبة الطلبة في اللغة على ألفاظ كتب أصحاب الحنفية

-. "فتاوى أدرجها علي بن أبي بكر المرغيناني في كتابه "في الفتاوى"، ومحمد الكرمانى في "جواهر الفتاوى

4]- "تعداد الشيوخ" لعمر، مستطرف على الحروف مسطر جمع فيه شيوخه وهم 550 شيخ [4].

ويمثل لنا هذا العدد من أساتذة أبي حفص النسفي كيف زحرت في بلاد خراسان بحار العلم وتفنن أهلها في أصناف العلوم واستنباط المسائل والفنون، كما يتجلى فيه ولع هذا الفقيه بتلقي العلم عن كل من يلاقيه من الفقهاء. وربما كشفت لنا الحكاية التالية عن بعض السر في وفرة شيوخه

أراد أبو حفص النسفي أن يزور جارا الله العلامة الزمخشري في مكة. فلما وصل إلى داره، دق الباب ليفتحوه ويأذنوا له بالدخول. فقال الشيخ: «من ذا الذي يدق الباب؟» فقال: «عمر». فقال جارا الله: «انصرف!». فقال نجم الدين: «يا سيدي! عمر لا ينصرف». فقال الشيخ: «إذا نكر، [ينصرف]» [5].

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